



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Public Health

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To: Live Poultry Dealers in NC

The N.C. Division of Public Health and the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services are asking stores that sell or display chicks, ducklings and other live poultry to help educate their employees and the public about certain health risks associated with handling these birds.

Poultry, including baby chicks and ducklings, may have *Salmonella* in their droppings and on their feathers, feet, and beaks, even when they appear healthy and clean. *Salmonella* can also get on cages, coops, hay, plants, and soil in the area where the poultry live and roam.

People become infected with *Salmonella* when they put their hands, or other things that have been in contact with poultry or their feces, in or around their mouth. Young children are especially at risk for illness because

- Their ability to defend themselves against infection is not yet fully effective (e.g. stomach acidity, immune system)
- They are more likely than others to put their fingers or other items into their mouths.
- Young children are less likely than others to wash their hands well

Salmonella infection is a serious illness that can cause fever, headaches, severe abdominal cramps, diarrhea, nausea and vomiting anywhere from 1-7 days after a person gets infected. While many people recover in a few days without any medical treatment, some will experience life-threatening illnesses, bloody diarrhea, dehydration and other complications.

Whenever people handle live poultry or touch anything in the area where poultry are housed, it is important that they immediately wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water to reduce the chances of accidentally becoming infected.

In 2012, there were 195 human cases of *Salmonella* illness associated with baby and backyard poultry in 27 states. Fifteen of those cases were in North Carolina. The CDC now recommends that:

Mail-order hatcheries, agricultural feed stores, and others that sell or display chicks, ducklings, and other live poultry should provide health-related information to owners and potential purchasers of these birds prior to the point of purchase. This should include information about the risk of acquiring a *Salmonella* infection from contact with live poultry.

The Division of Public Health and the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services are asking stores such as yours to display these enclosed posters and provide customers information about potential health risks associated with live poultry handling. English and Spanish versions of the posters are enclosed. Electronic copies are available at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website:

<http://www.cdc.gov/HEALTHYPETS/resources/posters.htm#poultry>. Additional information about biosecurity for birds can be found at: http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/birdbiosecurity/.

Thank you for your help in promoting the safe handling of live poultry.

Sincerely,

Carl Williams

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